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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LAGOS 000311

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DOE FOR GPERSOON, CHAYLOCK

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/16/2019

TAGS: [EPET](#) [ENRG](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: CHEVRON EXEC SAYS GON WARNED OF ATTACK IN LAGOS

REF: A. LAGOS 297  
[B.](#) LAGOS 300  
[C.](#) ABUJA 1226  
[D.](#) ABUJA 1278  
[E.](#) 08 LAGOS 41  
[F.](#) LAGOS 82

Classified By: Consul General Donna M. Blair for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary: Chevron Nigeria's government and corporate affairs manager Femi Odumabo told Energyoff on July 16 that traditional rulers and local residents from kingdoms in Delta State had warned Chevron, the Nigerian State Security Service (SSS), and military's Joint Task Force (JTF), that Tompolo's organization was planning an attack on a Lagos facility two weeks before the Atlas Cove attack on July 12. Although the Nigerian Navy initially responded by increasing its presence around Atlas Cove, it returned to a normal posture two days before the attack citing a lack of a credible threat.

Odumabo does not believe an amnesty will succeed unless the GON deals directly with Tompolo, whom he described as the best organized and most competent of the militant commanders.

Additionally, he doubts that any general amnesty will stick without sustained and visible efforts by the GON to deal with the underlying causes of poverty in the Niger Delta. Odumabo worries that Tompolo may seek to conduct additional strikes outside of the Niger Delta, like Abuja, to ramp up pressure on the GON. In an aside, he claimed that the lieutenant colonel killed in a May 13 militant ambush on a JTF boat in Delta State was the son of former Nigerian military president Abdulsalami Abubakar, and this accounts for the unusually large scale of the JTF's assault on Tompolo's camps in Delta State. Odumabo is Chevron's point man on community relations and in close contact with key Chevron Nigeria's top expatriate executives and security officers as well as local community leaders in Delta, Rivers, and Bayelsa States. His views likely reflect the thinking of Chevron Nigeria officials. Mission is in regular contact with Chevron officials and others on the issue of "militant attacks" outside of the Delta and will be monitoring those contacts and other channels on this issue.

End Summary.

GON Warned of Attack on Lagos Two Weeks Prior

[¶](#)2. (C) Chevron Nigeria's government and corporate affairs

manager Femi Odumabo told Energyoff on July 16 that the GON was warned two weeks in advance that militants associated with Tompolo were planning an attack on a facility in the port of Lagos, probably the Atlas Cove fuel depot. Residents and traditional rulers from communities in Delta State that are home to Chevron facilities had warned Chevron, the SSS, and the JTF that Tompolo was planning an attack in Lagos port and marshaling armed men in the Epe area of Lagos in preparation. According to Odumabo, the Nigerian Navy significantly increased its presence in and around Atlas Cove in response, but two days before the attack it returned to its normal security posture complaining that it was wasting resources on a threat that was not credible (Refs A, B).

¶3. (C) When asked if Chevron was concerned about a possible attack on its headquarters and housing facility on Lekki Peninsula in Lagos, Odumabo said the company was not worried, and the company had not altered its security posture, which he described as "layered and sufficient." Odumabo said Chevron is fairly confident, and has been told by contacts within Tompolo's organization, that militants only attack Chevron oil and gas production facilities as a way of shutting down the flow of Nigeria's oil and hence hurting the GON financially. He said militant contacts have said they are not interested in attacking Chevron's non-oil and gas infrastructures like housing. Ambassador spoke with Chevron Country Manager on July 14 to ask about updates on the company's security posture. The Country Manager stated he thought that company's current security posture could weather the storm. However, he believed that either current or past oil workers were providing technical assistance to

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the "militants" on where and when to attack oil infrastructures. However, in an aside later in the conversation, Odumabo said Chevron did believe Tompolo may attempt another attack outside of the Niger Delta as way of increasing pressure on the GON. He said Abuja was a possibility, but couldn't say what a possible target might be. (Note: While there are no significant oil and gas operations in or around Abuja, the headquarters of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation is located there and there is a lot of displeasure by "militants" and others in the region about NNPC that has been built up over the years. End Note.)

¶4. (C) On the GON's amnesty and release of Henry Okah, Odumabo said that neither would do anything to calm the situation in the western Niger Delta. He believes that unless the GON kills or captures Tompolo, it must make a deal with him directly to, at a minimum, restore the situation to the uneasy status quo that existed prior to the May 15 JTF offensive in Delta State. In the broader Niger Delta context, Odumabo does not see how the GON's proposed amnesty can succeed without a concurrent and realistic plan to build infrastructure, create jobs particularly for young men, and provide basic services to local communities (Ref C). He likened the release of Okah to the June 2007 release of captured militant leader Dokubo Asari by President Yar'Adua, an action which he said did nothing to stop the security problems in the Niger Delta (Ref D). On the MEND cease fire, Odumabo said that would have little bearing on the activity of Tompolo in Delta State, particularly if the JTF maintains the pressure on him.

¶5. (C) While discussing the chain of events leading to the current outbreak of violence in the western Niger Delta, Odumabo repeated the allegation that the lieutenant colonel killed by the militants in the May 13 militant ambush of a JTF river boat was the son of former Nigerian military President AbdulSalam Abubakar. He also personally believes the JTF and GON blundered badly by failing to understand and plan for the underlying community dynamics in the area before attacking Tompolo. While certain elements of the GON may pay lip service to developing the Niger Delta, fundamentally the GON and JTF do not understand the need for a coordinated

civilian engagement plan that goes hand in hand with military operations against militant groups.

¶ 6. (C) In a later meeting with Lagos Consul General, Odumabo said the Niger Delta Ministry has asked Chevron for assistance in replicating the company's Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) model for use by the Ministry in other parts of the Niger Delta. (Note: Under Chevron's GMOU, local communities take ownership for approving development projects, allocating funds, and hiring contractors, ensuring project completion, quality control, and post-completion operations and maintenance. Chevron provides funding, detailed social survey's and economic needs assessments and capacity building for project management and contracting. End Note.) However, he was highly critical of the personnel in the Ministry, saying most decision makers in it were too old and lethargic for the task that faces them.

¶ 7. (C) Comment: Odumabo is Chevron's point man on community relations and in close contact with Chevron Nigeria's top expatriate executives and security officers as well as local community leaders in Delta, Rivers, and Bayelsa States. His views likely reflect the thinking of Chevron Nigeria's leadership on most community issues. We hope Chevron is correct in their assumption that militants are not interested in attacking the company's administrative and housing facilities in Lagos. The company claims its outstanding community relations program has given it some measure of immunity; however, 300,000 barrels per day in lost oil production due to militant attacks in the past six weeks would seem to argue otherwise. Local contacts living in the region say Tompolo doesn't want the international scorn that would accompany attacks on non-oil infrastructure. However, it is also possible that Chevron administrative and housing facilities haven't been targeted because Tompolo previously confined attacks to the Niger Delta where Chevron doesn't

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have any administration or housing outside of the relatively heavily defended Escravos oil and gas facility. We also note a business associated with Tompolo had contracts to supply houseboats for workers building a gas facility in Chevron's Escravos site so maybe such an attack simply would have been bad for business (Ref E). With his demonstrated ability to strike outside his home territory and his previous business arrangements (legal and otherwise) likely in disarray, it is conceivable that the rules of the game have changed. "Militants" or criminals (albeit not associated with Tompolo) tried an unsuccessful assault on an ExxonMobil housing complex in Ekhet, Akwa Ibom State in February 2009, so an attack on a non-operational facility would not be an unprecedented move (Ref F). End Comment.

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